

Creative Philosophy

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I am a documentarist and a communicator. My photography is about the human condition in all of its glory and pathos, heroism and hubris, dignity and degradation. I am enduringly interested in the struggle of humankind to find and create meaning. To paraphrase communications scholar James Carey, one of my mentors, human beings create a symbolic universe in order to take up residence in it.

Many of my photographs include people and speak directly to human life and experience. Others document the human condition as reflected or expressed environmentally: in the built environment, as human impact on the natural environment, and in the sense of seeing human emotions and conditions in nature. One influence in this regard is Alfred Stieglitz, who photographed clouds in a series he called "Equivalents." Another is Georgia O'Keefe, who could draw a banana plant or paint a landscape pregnant with the human condition.

I believe that framing is a foundational aesthetic and communicative tool of the photographer, just as important as light. The act of imposing the camera frame on reality profoundly disrupts that reality, isolating and freezing a fragment of both time and space, which humans by and large experience as continuous.

This interest in framing extends beyond the moment of picture taking, when the camera's viewfinder frame is imposed on reality, to the presentation of photographs for others to see. Each of my current projects uses very different framing methods that contribute to the meaning and effect of the images.

***WATERLINE:** an interactive photo installation:* I began photographing the flood line in the city of New Orleans because it spoke powerfully to me of the devastation of a wonderful and irreplaceable city. The installation consists of photographs mounted edge to edge on white foam core panels with only the flood line in each photograph aligned. The foam core panels are also installed edge to edge, usually around the entire perimeter of an exhibition space, again with only the flood lines in the photographs aligned.

WATERLINE is an interactive exhibit. Marking pens are available for visitors to record responses on the foam core above and below the photographs. The installation method of exhibiting the photographs seeks to evoke the ubiquitous, equalizing and emotional power of the actual flood line in the city of New Orleans. The interactive aspect of the installation reflects my desire to evoke responses from viewers.

iPhone Diary explores the iPhone camera as a way of documenting a life. The photographs are titled with the date taken rather than where taken because they are more about moments in time than about location or geography. They also are not cropped but printed full frame with a small border of white space, which requires me to be very clear and deliberate at the moment of making the photograph about what I see and how to frame it so that others will be able to see it as well.

Old and Beautiful consists of silver prints made 30 years ago but never exhibited. Each print has been matched with a vintage frame collected in recent years. Each of these works is unique in its combination of image and frame, and thus the project challenges the photographic work as infinitely reproducible.

I am also currently documenting Louisiana wildflowers and curating a related theme on Google+, Louisiana agriculture and my university's Charles Allen Biological Station, a nearly 100-acre natural site in the biologically unique Copendagen Hills near Columbia, La.